



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 25, 2023

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Dr. Scott M. Koenigsknecht, Deputy Superintendent 
P-20 System and Student Transitions

SUBJECT: Substitute Teacher Placement for Special Education Programs

The Michigan Department of Education's Office of Special Education recommends that districts review federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) minimum requirements for teachers placed in special education classrooms and suggests that districts prioritize substitute teacher placement in each special education classroom to ensure those classrooms are staffed by an individual who minimally has a bachelor's degree and is participating in either a traditional or alternative route to special education certification.

While Michigan law [MCL 380.1233\(5\)\(a\)](#) allows for substitute teachers to work under a permit with a minimum of 60 credit hours, the federal IDEA requires districts to provide students with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE), which includes specially designed instruction from appropriately and adequately trained personnel as outlined in [34 CFR §300.156](#).

Districts are reminded of their responsibility to ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a FAPE that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for future education, employment, and independent living, and to ensure the effectiveness of efforts to educate all students with disabilities ([34 CFR §300.1](#)). The IDEA is clear that the minimum requirements for a qualified teacher are a bachelor's degree and participation in either a traditional or alternative route to a special education certification program ([34 CFR §300.156](#)).

Additional information on personnel qualifications is available in a memorandum issued by the federal Office of Special Education Programs on October 4, 2022: [Personnel Qualifications under Part B of IDEA](#).

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Please contact the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education information line at 1-888-320-8384 or MDE-OSE@Michigan.gov with any questions.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments